



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
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ISRD 183/17

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, September 12, 2017

Time: 4:30pm
Place: Bush Asia Center
409 Maynard Avenue S.
Basement meeting room

Board Members Present

Sergio Legon-Talamoni
Carol Leong
Tiernan Martin, Chair
Herman Setijono

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Eliza Chan
Stephanie Hsie
Valerie Tran

Chair Tiernan Martin called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

091217.1 APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES
August 22, 2017
MM/SC/CL/SLT 4:0:0 Minutes approved.

091217.2 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

091217.21 501 S. Jackson St. – Buty Building
Applicant: Kevin Smith, smith co.

Ms. Frestedt explained the proposed change of use from “retail” to “restaurant/café” at the ground floor and basement for 85C Bakery. Exhibits included floor plans. She said the Buty Building is a contributing building located within the Retail Core and the Asian Design Character District. Signage and design details will be part of a separate application.

Applicant Comment:

Keith Smith, smith co., explained that the tenant, 85c, has other stores in Southcenter, Lynnwood, and Federal Way. He said that they are halfway through the permit phase and plan to start construction at the end of the year. He said the kitchen will be in the basement and a dumbwaiter will take food up to main level. He said there will be cases along the interior of the 5th Avenue S. windows for 'grab and go'. He said there will be no exterior work outside of cleaning up sign holes, repair of broken windows. He said they will submit for signage and window film separately. They will have seating area and lounge and will provide activation for the area.

Public Comment:

Shanti Breznau, SCIDPDA, provided background on the space and noted public safety issues at that corner. She noted civility crimes and the relationship to the existing business and the lack of transparency. She said they have worked with multiple agencies and talked to the property owner. She said a business like this is needed to transform the area and provide activation.

Board Discussion:

Ms. Leong said she had no concern and that this will be a positive contribution. She noted that this is a business with a positive reputation. She encouraged the applicant to be mindful of the Code and Rules on signage with their branding. She said this is the entryway to the District and to preserve the historical and cultural nature of the neighborhood where use of Asian characters is encouraged.

Mr. Martin said the proposed use is consistent with preferred street-level uses. He asked what the hours will be.

Mr. Smith said 8:00 am to 8-10:00 pm; it depends on the market of the area.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for use, as proposed.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval, based on consideration of the application submittal and Board discussion at the September 12, 2017 public meeting, and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

The proposed use meets the following sections of the **International Special Review District Ordinance and applicable Design Guidelines:**

SMC 23.66.320 – Permitted uses

SMC 23.66.326 – Street-level uses

MM/SC/HS/CL 4:0:0 Motion carried.

Ms. Leong added that with businesses with multiple locations, it's appreciated if the business has an exterior design that reflects the cultural and historic character of the neighborhood. She encouraged the use of Asian Characters added to the signage.

091217.4 BOARD BUSINESS (Board business was discussed out of agenda order)

Ms. Frestedt provided an overview of the upcoming election, noting which seat would be coming up for election on November 21st. She said that the election materials would be distributed and posted in the neighborhood within the next two weeks.

091217.3 BOARD BRIEFING

091217.31 450 S. Main St. – KODA Condominiums
Presenter: Yang Lee, KMD Architects (on behalf of Da-Le International)

Ms. Frestedt introduced the Preliminary Design briefing on proposed new construction of a 17-story mixed-use condominium development with ground floor retail and 3-levels of below-grade parking. She said the focus of Preliminary Design is the building's bulk/mass/scale. She said handouts on Land Use Code, Secretary of Interior Standards were available for the public.

Yang Lee, KMD Architects, provided handouts and presented via PowerPoint (full report in DON file). Following is a summary of board and public questions and comments. Mr. Lee went over goals and objectives and their design strategy. He explained the community engagement they had conducted during a two-day work session at Hirabayashi Place where they discussed options and received feedback. He said the open house was well-attended. He said that 71 groups came through to address design goals. Mr. Lee said that since the last meeting they looked at set back options and concerns about the canyon affect.

Jason McCleary, KMD Architects, provided sight views with and without set back and said there is no perceived difference at street level. He said Code section states there must be reasonable solar and air circulation. He said they looked at how their options relate to when the adjacent parking lot is developed. He said pushing to the south provides more lighting and air for the future building to the north. He noted the stated visual connection to Pioneer Square and said they prefer to create identification into neighborhood rather than outward connection. He said the set back with light element will draw people into neighborhood.

Mr. Lee said they will anchor the corner with character; he showed options and said a setback makes it disappear and that is not a good option. He showed four revised massing options and said they prefer to keep the corner intact with Option Proudly Standing.

Mr. McCleary said that the concepts were provided to the community and that 78.6% of survey respondents from the Open House supported their preferred approach. He said it provides better visual order and is more consistent with other neighborhood buildings. He said the board told them that retail is a better use at street level and they propose retail use during the day and lobby use after hours. He said that one of the challenges of a retail only strategy is the nature of the slope. He said while it is desirable to set the entrance at the

corner there are challenges to meet ADA requirements. He said they are proposing a hybrid retail/lobby option.

Mr. Lee expressed concern about the corner being dark after hours if the use was retail only.

Dean Jones, Realogics Sothebys Real Estate advised Da Li on the programming of the space. He noted the debate on the best use of the corner and visual interest and activation. He suggested a co-working space that retailers and patrons could use as well. He said this has been successfully deployed in other markets and they are open all hours. He said there is not a lot of identity of Nihonmachi. He said there is interest from the stakeholders in developing the 4 corners as a Nihonmachi Square to create placemaking. He said the team was inspired by this concept and referenced opportunities to create a sense of arrival.

Mr. Lee provided photos of examples of hybrid retail and said they can achieve a similar function and integrated space. He said possible uses could include: a gallery, bonze area and pop up spaces for vending.

Mr. Jones said there is a lot of concern about failed retail and perpetual change. He suggested multiple uses that work together.

Mr. Lee said visual order is about character. He said they will distinguish the International District with a contemporary expression, resilient adaptability, and pride of immigrant. He noted the dignity of the Panama and noted the windows have their own crown. He said noted the serenity of the H. T. Kubota building and noted the subtlety, and order and said it is not highly ornamented. He called the Addison the “King” of the block as it is bright and light with tall clear windows. He noted the visual character of the adjacent Hirabayashi Place and said this must be in harmony with that; it is a little setback of street front massing. It is an icon of Nihonmachi and the wave is the most recognized pattern and they want to continue with that.

Mr. McCleary said that each building speaks to the style of construction at the type it was built. He noted the visual order of building elements and stepped datum that responds to grade. He said that he wants to tie the building form to the exterior design, with a clear base and middle using materials to break the scale down. He said they’re looking at ways to refine the top. He referenced the vertical treatment through different shades of glazing, with consistent materials. He said the canopy would be black metal, similar to the HT Kubota Building. He went over section of building and noted Nihonmachi retail scale and rhythm and how the uses are broken up. He noted the grade and accessibility issues but said they are trying to replicate the small retail scale experience.

Mr. Lee provided different perspectives of the NE, SW, and NW corner pedestrian experience.

Mr. McCleary said the property to the north is under development and they propose metal panel on the north façade only as a cost-effective way to meet the energy code. He said the retail face on S. Main St. will provide as much open-ness as possible; they will use clear glazing, no tint, no blinds. He said hopefully they will have large-panel operable windows to create a dynamic connection to street front. He noted circulation stairs, elevators, and pass-through. He said on 5th Avenue S. there will be smaller retail, broken up with a larger retail space at the north end, perhaps with a restaurant function; they propose consistent

canopies. He said grade issues impact the planned use. He said there is a significant intersection and lack of placemaking. He said there is an opportunity here.

Mr. Lee suggested pavement treatment at the intersection.

Mr. McCleary said the community thought it was a great idea.

Departures

Mr. Lee reiterated departures. He said they sought a departure in the depth requirement for overhead weather protection at 5th Avenue S. corner because of a street tree.

Mr. McCleary said they sought a departure for roof coverage and screen setback and for a higher height limit for elevator overrun; they want 22' instead of 15'.

Ms. Frestedt said that no actions can be taken until the SEPA determination has been published.

Public Comment:

Steve Sawata expressed concern about the wind affect between Hirabayashi Place and KODA, as well as solar exposure. He asked if retail would have independent retail egress etc. He was concerned about main entry being through condo entry. He expressed concern about the neighborhood demographics and the affordability of the condos. He said it is a low median income area and he was concerned that this could push out the residents. He was discouraged by metaphorical design. He said it would be ideal to see spaces where community members can have a place to live. He expressed concern that the cost would make it inaccessible to community members. He commented on the proposed crosswalk placemaking proposal and said that if the developer is not going to make an effort to develop the crosswalk, he questioned who would take that project on. He said it would become someone else's issue.

Cynthia Brothers said she attended the open house. She asked which community groups were invited. She noted that the materials and signage were all in English. She said that it felt more like a sales pitch to buyers. She wondered about the effect on adjacent Hirabayashi Place with regard to light and shadow. She said the lobby and retail was described compared to Via 6 which she said is a luxury upscale development that is not in the same social economic strata as this neighborhood. She asked who they are marketing to / targeting. She said they use the language that KODA is anchoring Japantown. She said it is hard to see a glass tower as a landmark if it is not accessible to Asian immigrants or residents now. She said low income, affordable, family units are needed. She asked who this will contribute to the community when it is not reflective of what is here.

Christina Nguyen said she lives at Hirabayashi Place and didn't see any outreach about the meeting. She said this project will affect Hirabayashi Place and others. She asked if the condo serves a purpose to Japanese community other than pushing out people. She noted the history that forced Japanese to live in the area; it was not a luxury. She said the building is grotesquely high and questioned why 17 floors; she said it is shadowing over Hirabayashi Place. She asked about garbage truck access, bus route impacts. She said the community would have to do fundraising to do the intersection. She expressed concern

about affordability and noise pollution. She wants to see the incorporation of mom and pop retail shops.

Joseph Shoji Lachman, incoming president of Seattle branch of JACL, said his family was displaced in the 1940s. Nihonmachi disappeared and people were pushed out via 'legal' means. He said he wants the development to be in harmony with Hirabayashi Place; the outside needs to refer to inside. He said Hirabayashi Place worked with the community, local artists and poets. He shared concerns about affordability. He said that they don't want a glass fortress that excludes the community. The crosswalk concept must have meaning behind it and has to be taken seriously and not be left for someone else to do. He said they should make meaningful attempts at community engagement.

A resident of the community, asked about parking and said that the developers don't have the community in mind.

Shanti Breznau, contractor with the SCIDPDA, asked how many storefronts are proposed for S. Main St. She said the hybrid concept will still read as lobby. She said having retail located mid-block on its own will be challenging to keep storefronts filled. Corner locations are most attractive and would be occupied.

Mike Omura, SCIDPDA, said he shared Ms. Breznau and Mr. Sawada's comments. He said he doesn't understand how the hybrid space would function; entry from the condo lobby looks like it is not intended for the community. He'd like to see the retail concept carried forward. He said there had previously been very significant stores located on that block. He noted that the Wing Luke Museum is doing an exhibit with the National Parks Service - Japanese American Heritage Trail. He said they should pay homage to the history in the area. Regarding the setback, he recommended carrying back the Hirabayashi Place datum as far as possible, as currently proposed it just seems like a gesture. He said the 4' canopy is a joke; it would barely cover people on the sidewalk; either make it a canopy that covers or eliminated it.

Alyssa Yang said the project should be a benefit to the community, not just contribute to visual character. She asked if there would be units for elders and local culturally relevant retail.

Mr. Omura said there is excitement about the potential for affordable home ownership and this provides another housing type for those who qualify. He encouraged the developer to keep talking with city about affordable home ownership.

Ms. Frestedt read written comments submitted via email from board member Stephanie Hsie (in DON file).

Board Discussion:

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked if there is a setback requirement to the north property.

Mr. Lee said there are tower separation requirements above 65' if adjacent to immediate other properties.

Ms. Leong asked the presenters to summarize their preferred massing.

Mr. McCleary said one of the comments they'd heard was to pull back the façade from S. Main St. to provide relief and reduce the canyon effect. He said they want to push their building all the way up to S. Main St., but reduce the scale along the elevations to address adjacency to Hirabayashi Place elevation datum line. He said they showed both options, one where they were setting back the building which is not their preferred option. He noted page 37 of the handout and said pushing all the way up to Main reduces the scale relative to Hirabayashi Place.

Ms. Leong asked about the setback as shown on the north side opening.

Mr. McCleary said it is set back enough to allow windows without needing fire rating.

Board Deliberation:

North façade massing schemes

No additional comments.

Main St. façade massing schemes

Mr. Martin appreciated that they solicited public comment at the sales event and it was good to hear what people thought. He asked why they decided to put setback 7-8 stories up rather than lower to be more consistent with Hirabayashi Place.

Mr. Lee said if they had more setback it would become a private deck to only a few residents and they couldn't control the aesthetics of it. With the setback requirement they were able to provide an amenity deck. If you push back more you are losing more developable area.

Mr. Martin asked if the setback off Main would be sacrificing outdoor amenity space on the north side.

Mr. Lee said the core is in the middle of the site and they can't move the core; they can't squeeze the units down any further. He said they are small units but it would become unusable.

Mr. Martin noted the tension of holding the Hirabayashi Place datum line versus holding the strong vertical line at the corner; he urged them to push it further to emphasize the relationship with Hirabayashi Place.

Mr. McCleary said they moved the kinked wall.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni appreciated that they were holding the corner volumetrically and geometrically but said he was struggling with differentiating what is pushed back and what is proud on both sides. He recommended breaking up the glass tower with more solid materials to play with the transition between high-rise and low-rise buildings.

Ms. Leong agreed with her colleagues and expressed concern with a tall, glass structure. She said the city provided opportunity to build high but said to be cognizant that the district is made up of small to mid-rise buildings. She noted this building is at the entry to the

district and one of the first projects that could set the tone for what is to come. She said to find opportunities to explore setback and not become just a very large building.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni referenced alternate ways to anchor the corner. He recommended bringing concreteness from Hirabayashi Place and extend it into the datum on south façade. He said it is not enough to shade the color of the glass.

Mr. McCleary said they studied solid materials for condo sales; the client wants a sellable glass option. He said they are making a successful development.

Mr. Martin recognized the constraints in sales, but said there are also constraints of developing within an historic district and cited 23.66.336 C.

Discussion of the ground floor lobby/retail design

Mr. Martin said the community wants well-defined retail use rather than hybrid. He noted the impenetrability of the current proposal and said there are challenges with slope and grade.

Ms. Leong said community is concerned with retail; she wanted information on number of retail spaces available. She said small retail shops are the character of the neighborhood and she wants to see a response to that. She said to retain cultural commercial and pedestrian level activity. She said there should be access to residents, community. She said it is a wonderful space to pay homage to the history. She said the retail level adds to the neighborhood.

Ms. Frestedt stated that the Board does not have jurisdiction over the interior design. She said it is a delicate balance how to address how what is inside is expressed on exterior.

Ms. Leong said she wants them to provide the direction they are moving in.

Mr. McCleary said the hybrid space can host events and be a benefit to the community. He said the corner space is not the lobby; they want it to be a community space used for community events.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni he said it is one thing to say it, it is another to convey that programmatically. He said he understands the flexibility of these spaces but wondered about the commitment of the space.

Mr. McCleary said retail is not a requirement, they are only accommodating a request by the community.

Mr. Setijono asked about the 4' canopy.

Mr. McCleary said there is a code conflict with required clearance for street trees and the width of the sidewalk.

Ms. Frestedt suggested they show difference in response if departures are granted, and if not. She said the hybrid option is an interesting concept, but there is inherent conflict with no opening to the street. She said use is under board purview and asked the applicants to provide operational details how the space would be operated and managed. She said

multiple retail spaces were shown at Hirabayashi Place but it was leased to one tenant and that windows are covered with blinds. She said that was counter to what was presented to the board.

Mr. McCleary said they plan clear glass with no blinds.

Mr. Martin said the use of stepped down datum wrapping south and east facades is successful. He said the southeast corner is a huge improvement over earlier presentation of depressed public space. He noted the tension between public use and other privately managed space that is privately accessed. He asked if there is an entry option for the corner.

Mr. McCleary said it is a tough balancing act to meet ADA requirements there.

Ms. Frestedt said to show corner studies, even if they may not be desirable, to understand the visual impact.

Mr. Martin said this is the first large building going in and they hope to set patterns for the future. He said it is helpful to understand why something is proposed the way it is.

Mr. Lee said the energy code requires a vestibule. He said if you put it in, it eliminates storefront space.

Mr. Martin said to make entrances on 5th; that is the access point.

Richard Gee, Da Li International, said there is intention of circulation between retail and corner space. He clarified that the open house meeting was a design review event, not a sales event. The pricing came up only because they were asked.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked if there is any potential to set the entrance back to define it?

Mr. Martin asked if storefront entries on Main St. are recessed.

Mr. McCleary said they are, because of the door swing and Code requirements. Door recessed about 4'.

Mr. Martin said the choice of materiality can reinforce massing, emphasizing the datum line, making concept of holding down corner vertically successful, etc. He said the 'vertical light element' is not reflective anywhere else in the district. He said to think carefully about that and how they tension the reference of a new building in a historic district. He said branding and signage will be important.

Ms. Frestedt said materials can help address bulk, mass, and scale and it is appropriate to talk to that level of detail.

Ms. Leong said she would like to see better explanation or definition of the wave concept because she doesn't see that in the design.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said sometimes, as architects, we can over analyze what we're drawing reference from and references can get lost in the translation when abstracted. He said this is opportunity to play with density more in proud elements versus recessed

portions of the building, and to explore the opacity and color of glazing to help define stronger elements of building, as a whole.

Mr. Martin referred to absent board member, Stephanie Hsie's, emailed comments about glazing (in DON file). He said he agreed with her comments about the windows and said the lower and upper section similarity is too subtle to pick up the applicant's design intent. He said one challenge is that the southeast corner is vertical; he said he'd like to see exploration of ideas that will put a break in the verticality.

Mr. McCleary said they are trying to reduce the number of materials in the box. He said he understood the comment about changing the material at the base to help it blend in and alleviate some of the vertical scale of the building.

Mr. Martin said the massing should reflect the neighborhood more strongly and have the windows follow, rather than the other way around.

Ms. Frestedt stated that in this instance a simple model that helped to convey scale could be useful.

There was comment by member of public about height of the building. Mr Gee responded by saying that the height of the building is a response, in part, to the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) legislation. As a developer they could have chosen to contribute to MHA via the performance (payment in lieu of developing affordable units on site) option and that is increasing the height of the development. He said it is a voluntary effort.

Mr. Martin said to the investment into performance for affordable home ownership also fits into goals of district, citing SMC 23.66.302A.

Ms. Leong asked if the board has provided the developers the input they were seeking.

Mr. McCleary said it had. He said this project is a bit different than an apartment project. They are looking for quicker buy-in so they can develop plans to go out to the public with. He said they want to be sure the type of product they are putting out fits this neighborhood.

Mr. Gee said more than 50% of the units are studios to make it more affordable. He said they are not displacing anyone; they are developing a parking lot.

Mr. Setijono left at 7:20 pm.

Ms. Leong said the board sees the developer's intent and now needs to dive into the details.

Adjourn 7:30 pm

Rebecca Frestedt, Board Coordinator
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